

## Written Testimony Supporting Proposed House Bill 7285

Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong and members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Sarah Damon and I am a resident of Stamford CT. I am writing in support of the Proposed House Bill 7285 to ensure compliance with section 7-294bb of the Connecticut general statutes concerning the acceptance, processing, and investigation of a complaint from a member of the public relating to alleged misconduct committed by law enforcement agency personnel.

As a project manager in technology, I believe very firmly in transparency and accountability, not as a way to assign blame but as a way to build trust and improve processes. With my tech team this means facilitating open discussion across different groups about what works and what doesn't, providing reporting and an escalation process when there is friction between groups, and giving all team members an opportunity to privately or anonymously report issues. These principles should apply in building trust between police and community as well as in business. As Wilton police Capt John Lynch has said, the complaint process "helps us identify if officers need training in certain areas or if changes need to be made, so it's a really helpful tool for us. And it just helps provide the feeling of transparency and accountability to the public."

Proposed House Bill 7285 takes an important step in recognizing that our police complaint process is broken. I also believe that the Bill as originally written does not go far enough in addressing the holes in the complaint process. As such, I ask this committee to amend Proposed House Bill 7285 to support accountability, standardization and reporting since the current rules are not being consistently followed.

The Greenwich Time recently reported on an ACLU study which found that many Danbury area towns, including New Milford where I grew up and my parents still live, do not make the complaint process available to those who call in to the police departments and do not provide a complaint form online. In nearby Norwalk and Bridgeport, residents must physically go to the police department to fill out a complaint. Even as a young white woman with a good command of English and generally positive experience with police, the idea of walking in to the station to make a complaint is very intimidating - I can't imagine how someone from the many communities that do not have much trust in our police would feel.

I believe that recognizing the above limitations in the current complaint process necessitates the following amendments to HB 7285:

- enforcing complaint rules with true penalties for non-compliance
- standardizing the complaint form to comply with best practices and translating it into commonly-spoken languages
- requiring tracking and annual reporting of complaint data to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Damon  
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